

Sixty-two species of dragonflies (and counting) detected in the Quilliams Wildlife Reserve.

2015/01/27 by R.L.B.



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During the summer 2013 and 2014 seasons, biologist and geographer, Alain Mochon, a partner of Renaissance Brome Lake, painstakingly compiled a population survey of dragonfly species (scientifically known as Odonata), revealing that there were some 62 of them in the Quilliams reserve, of an estimated more than 140 such species throughout Quebec. The larvae of certain species are used as biological indicators because of their sensitivity to pollutants present in water. The high number of dragonfly species present in the Quilliams area indicates an exceptional quality for this important Brome Lake ecosystem. This inventory is one of many similar studies already carried out by RBL, including those on birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians.

Dragonflies play a major role in our gardens and in the overall environment. They feed on such tiny insects as mosquitoes and thus help control the population. They are also part of the food chain of the living organisms of the aquatic ecosystem, serving as food themselves for frogs and birds.

Dragonflies spend a good deal of time in the air. They hunt and eat while flying. Some species are naturally airborne and can fly several kilometres in distance. Thanks to their large eyes, dragonflies see well and this helps when hunting. They can turn their heads almost 360°. Although they are incapable of bending their four wings, these primitive insects can, manipulate them independently. The wings move rather slowly, 30 beats per second, compared to the thousand or so of the fly, for example. Despite this constraint, some species can reach speeds of up to 70 km/h and migrate of thousands of kilometres.

Anisoptera (true dragonflies) can fly vertically, hover and fly backwards.

The number of important species of dragonflies present in our environment shows us once again that we live in an exceptional environment and that we must do all we can to protect it.

The report and photographs can be consulted here (in french).